

## Presentation Design

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When you use PowerPoint, do you feel constrained by the default setup? Do you may feel that you've been tied to or handicapped by the bulleted list?

In this seminar we will discuss more dynamic ways of designing and presenting your slides so that your audience remains engaged and focused. We'll also discuss where to find graphics, how to recognize a good logo, and how to manipulate images using PowerPoint and other available software on the NC State Campus.

### Presentation Myths vs. Truths

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Myth	Truth
You shouldn't have too many slides in your presentation.	If you limit the amount of information per slide, you may have lots of slides but still have an effective presentation.
There's no need for me to use graphical cues to point out the organization of the presentation.	Research shows that people learn better when you use visual cues to highlight a presentation's organization.
People will learn more if I show more.	Research shows that people learn better when information is presented in bite-size pieces.
It's ok to read my bullet points from the screen.	Research shows that people understand a multimedia presentation better when the words are presented as verbal narration alone, instead of verbally and as on-screen text.
It's easier to read slide titles that are sentence fragments.	Audiences exhibit greater comprehension when presented with complete sentence headlines.
Graphics are nice to have, but they're not essential.	Research shows that people learn better from words and pictures than from words alone (when the picture illustrate what the words say, not when pictures are added for decorative effect).
People learn more when I wow them with special effects and spice up my presentations with razzle-dazzle.	Research shows that people learn better when extraneous information is removed from a presentation.

## Communication: Pipeline vs. Eye of the Needle

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You may assume that communication is like a pipeline with a direct channel between the “sender” and the “receiver.” With this in mind, you would think that however you decide to design your PowerPoint, your audience will receive the message in the way you send it.

Unfortunately, communication does not work exactly like a pipeline. According to research from educational psychologist Richard E. Mayer, giving a multimedia presentation to an audience has three possible outcomes:

- *Worst-case scenario* – your audience experiences no learning
- *Usual scenario* – your audience experiences fragmented learning – they remember a few bullet points and diagrams, but not the big picture of your presentation
- *Best-case scenario* – your audience experiences meaningful learning – they remember exactly what you intended

During your presentation, the memory of your audience member is the critical element that determines how well your lesson is received, processed, and stored. There are three types of human memory.

- *Sensory memory* is memory that briefly stores initial impressions of sights and sounds. Sensory memory is potentially unlimited in capacity, although items may be perceived in sensory memory for less than a second.
- *Long-term memory* is where you store information over an extended period of time – where we’d all like to hope our presentations are stored! It is also potentially unlimited in capacity.
- *Working memory*, sometimes called *short-term memory*, is the part of the mind where you hold your attention. It is basically a temporary holding area for information. Working memory takes sensory memories and attempts to integrate them into long-term memory.

Since working memory is limited, the pipeline metaphor doesn’t work. Instead, think of the eye of a needle. Since you have to “thread the eye of a needle,” you cannot present as much information as you might want to. If you show too much information, like large bulleted lists, busy diagrams, or even large chunks of text while you talk, your audience will not be able to take in all the facts you are presenting.

People receive and process visual and verbal information in 2 separate but related channels. Images are processed through the visual channel while narration is processed through the verbal channel. **Text** actually gets converted to the verbal channel! So if you have bulleted lists and are talking at the same time, you’re presenting too many chunks to the same channel.

To properly plan for the 2 channels in working memory – visual and verbal:

- Plan your presentation on paper or in storyboard mode before starting to design individual slides in PowerPoint.
- Once in PowerPoint, expand the Notes section at the bottom of the slide.
  - Plan your narration/lecture in the Notes section. Type it all out! If you are going to provide handouts to accompany your presentation, you’re prepping that work at the same time.
  - Ignore the default PowerPoint slide layout – simply add a title and simple image or diagram to your slide.

## Checklist for Creating PowerPoint Presentations

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1. Identify your audience
2. Determine objectives
3. Choose strategies (motifs)
4. Develop storyboard
5. Modify slide/notes masters as needed
6. Add art and text to slides/ narration to notes
7. Add animation\*
8. Save everything!

\* *optional*

*Modified from Better Than Bullet Points, Jane Bozarth*

## Design Tips

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Keep these ideas in mind when designing your presentation layout:

- The most important piece of your presentation is the life of your narration – not how many bullet points you can fit on a slide!
  - Use storytelling to add life to your presentation
- Simpler is better
  - Avoid templates – start with a simple slate of white or basic color
  - Only brand the first and/or last slides – you don't need logos to clutter every screen
  - Be concise
  - Remove interesting but extraneous information and graphics
  - Use white space for emphasis
- Be visually concise, clear, direct, and specific
  - Make your headlines complete sentences instead of fragments
  - Don't feel like you have to include too much detail on your slide – that's what your narration is for!
  - Don't let PowerPoint dictate what you put on your slide
- Make your most important points stand out
  - Use a common style for the key points – red text with repeated images, block of color on the left side to signify key point, etc.
- Use images to enhance your presentation – not as dressing

## Finding Images

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### Free

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- **Microsoft clipart** – clipart has expanded by leaps and bounds in recent years. You can still find the cutesy (read: don't use) graphics, but there are also lots of photos and sophisticated icons.
- **Flickr Creative Commons images** – photos that people have posted that you can use for free – generally. (Please read the restrictions on the main page.)  
<http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/>
- **Your own photos**

### For a fee

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There are many sites that offer stock photos. Two common ones are:

- <http://www.istockphoto.com/>
- <http://www.corbis.com>

## Manipulating Images with PowerPoint

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For instructions on how to use PowerPoint's image editing features, check out:

- PowerPoint Help
- Microsoft Online Training - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/>
  - Click on **PowerPoint 2007**
  - Look at the "Picture Basics" section

## Animation Tutorials

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- PowerPoint Heaven: <http://pptheaven.mvps.org/animations.html> - Great examples plus tutorials
- PowerPoint Workbench: <http://www.pptworkbench.com/html/communication.htm> - tutorials
- Microsoft Online Training - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/>
  - Click on **PowerPoint 2007**
  - Look at the "Use Animation" section